

## HOME READING.

## FLOWERS OF WINTER.

(A VALENTINE.)

On summer days, when passing by  
A garden hedge of roses,  
I said, "Ah me! the winter dream  
No bloom like this discloses!"

But winter came; and when the wind  
All frosty, keen was blowing,  
I met each morn a little maid,  
With cheeks so redly glowing;

I said, "Why! here again I find  
The roses I lamented!"  
And summer flowers no more regret,  
With winter's bloom contented."

Emilie Paulsson, in St. Nicholas.

Jay Gould.

## SOME FACTS ABOUT HIM WHICH THE PUBLIC DOESN'T KNOW.

The other morning, while Mr. Cole, the proprietor of the approaching circus and menagerie of that name, was standing on the steps of that excellent hotel, the Russ house, a tall, sunburnt, bald-headed man, with pine burrs in his hair, and a stick of sassafras in his mouth, approached and said: "Be you the wild animal man, mister?" The proprietor of the "Double Mammoth Mastodon Aggregation," admitted that such was the fact. "Then," proceeded the party from the mountains: "I think I got you to make me an offer for a large-sized, healthy California lion I've got." "Good specimen, eh?" asked the circus man. "Good? Well! I should say so. Measure seven feet from the tip of his nose to the tip of his tail. Caught himself when a cub. Just four years and to-morrow." "H'm—Good appetite?" "Appetite? Great Scott—appetite? Well! I should say so; that's just why I'm parting with Jay—I call him Jay because he takes everything in. It wasn't for his appetite, and the queer little things it makes him do, I wouldn't part with Gould for a fortune." "Savage, eh?" "Well, no. I don't know as I should call Jay savage exactly; sadder habit of gnawing up things, so to speak. In fact, the neighbors—I live up at Bladder Peak—have got to be so uneasy and particular of late, that I can't so much as unchain J. G. for a little fresh air without their getting grumpy over it. There's no pleasing some people," said the hippopotamus. "I should say so. Now I instance, about three months after Jay got to be as big as a bearing house sofa, I came home one day from a picnic, and found he had eaten old Aunt Maria, who had been left at home to mind the house, leastwise she was nowhere to be found; and as Jay Gould seemed sort of bulky like, and kept coughing up hair pins and false teeth for a day or two, we kinder suspected the whole thing." "Maternal Aunt?" inquired the showman. "Exactly. My wife took on dreadfully at first, and wanted me to shoot Jay right off. But I told her that he probably suffered a good deal as it was, and that as most likely he'd catch the rheumatism and things from the remains, we'd better call it square."

"And did she?" "Well, she kinder got reconciled after a while, especially as Jay seemed so fond of playing with the children. One morning, soon after that, my wife's mother—whole family lived with me, you see—didn't come down to breakfast. As all her false hair was hanging over a chair-back, and Gould crawled out from under the bed, licking his chops, and with his tongue a good deal coated—mother-in-law was always taking things for the liver complaint—was at once in a situation to see the Providence, and that the heavy hand of affliction was again upon us. "Looked that way, didn't it?" "Well, as you may suppose, the old lady—that's my wife—pranced round a good deal then, and got down the breech-loader right away. But just then arrived a gold medal from the S. P. C. A. Society, awarded on account of my forbearance in the Aunt Maria business, and so I got her calmed down a bit. "Paralyzed, eh?" "Yes. I managed to arrange a reprieve for Jay, somehow. You see, I was always fond of pet and tender-hearted, and all that you understand. I argued that the poor animal didn't know he was doing wrong. Moralist man is merciful to his beast, etc., etc. That smoothed things over for another month."

"What happened then?" "Well, one day I sent Tommy, our youngest boy, down to the store for some sugar, and he took the cage along for company. Now, whether it was because Jay was fond of sugar or not I don't know, but he came home alone, and as soon as we noticed a peculiar kind of bulge on his ribs, about as big as Johnny, we concluded that the dread archer had marked another Skidmore—my name is Skidmore—for his own. The whole family took on the mad, and Mrs. Skid, was just about to shove the powder keg under J. G., and touch it off herself, when I pointed out to her that it wouldn't do to desert our offspring's tomb in that way. I just had the burial service read over the lion and tied crapes around his neck for thirty days. How does that strike you?" "After that you kept the animal caged?" "Well, no. The fact is I set out to get a chain several times, but one time and another prevented, until one day last week I actually missed the old fellow herself. I looked around for her for a couple of days, when somehow of a sudden I sorter intended where she was, and I got her calmed down a bit. Now, what I want to say is, that Jay was a pair of high-heeled shoes and a chest protector. It was too late to be late! We put the shoes and the chest in a coffin and had Jay laid behind the casket to the cemetery. Wanted to know as much of the corpse present as possible, you see. We had the animal all decorated with flowers and things as fine as you please. Folks said it was the finest thing that ever took place in the parts." "Don't wonder you want to bury the beast," remarked the menagerie man after a pause. "Well, I sorter do, and I sorter don't," said Mr. Skidmore, abstractedly. "There's so many theories and things clustering around it, it seems kinder like parting with one's child burying lot, as it were. On the other hand, though, now that the old fellow is gone, I sorter feel as if the insect world will high outlive his usefulness, so to speak, so suppose I have his box just nailed round to your show after the perturbation this afternoon, and see if we can't strike a bargain?" "All right," said the manager; "I'm going up Salt Lake way after awhile, and perhaps I can work him off for big money to some of the Mormon Elders." "There's a mint in him as a family pet," said the other earnestly, and after striking a bargain for a season dead the widower shouldered his umbrella and drifted sadly down the street.

San Francisco Post.

## Curious Facts About Ants.

Rev. J. G. Weed lectured at the Institute of Technology, Friday evening, on the subject of "Ants." He said that the more he studied the ants the more he became impressed with the idea that he knew comparatively little of them. Like many others of the insect tribe, they have in various ways anticipated the ingenious but usually long-studied devices of men. If an ant-hill be carefully examined, it will be seen that it resembles very closely in its interior construction, as respects shafts and galleries, that of a modern coal mine. The ant community has two principal divisions, the military and the civil. The latter are the working ants. When night approaches, the ants close or bar up the apertures of ingress to their nest or habitation, and place sentinels at each entrance. The civil class is subdivided into nurses, food-carriers, artisans and laborers. It is the business of the nurses to care for the cocoons and the male and female ants when they first emerge therefrom, wing clad, but not strong enough yet for flight. While they are waiting for their wings to grow, the food carriers bring for them the means of sustenance. These male and female ants have wings only for three or four weeks, and use them infrequently only about half an hour. After migration and mating they break off their wings. The working ants are females, but such as do not reach full development. The artisans among them are the skilled workers; the laborers are such as bring material for the artisans, and are never permitted to take a share in handling it for construction. The military division of the ant community discovered by instinct, what men arrived at by long experience, that it is well to have companies consist of about one hundred privates, and that each company should have four officers. As the column moves forward for the battle-ground the officers walk beside the companies and prevent straggling on the part of the rank and file. Official rank is indicated among them, not by differences of uniform or color, but by size of head. A captain has a much larger head than a private, and a general has a head as big as the head, body and wings of a private. Ants are long-lived. Professor Lubbock kept a queen ant alive for eight or nine years. The male ants are harmless creatures; it is the females that bite. So it is with the mosquitoes, and with bees and hornets. The largest and most intelligent ants are found in tropical lands, but those which live in our climate display great skill and capacity, and the study of their characteristics and habits of life is an inexhaustible one, presenting many yet unsolved problems.—Boston Transcript

## Senator Stainsby's Tree Bill.

Senator Stainsby's proposition, in the form of a joint resolution of both houses of the Legislature, requesting the Governor to set apart a day, after April 1st of each year, for tree planting by the people of the State, will meet with universal favor. It is intended that children and adults shall join in this exercise, and that the day shall be a sort of gala event. The planting of a tree, either by a child or an aged person, is full of poetic suggestions. The child looks forward to the day when he may repose under its shade and see "rock on its towery top all throats that gurgle sweet;" the man of three-score leaves it as a legacy to those who may come after him. For generations it is a thing of beauty. The New York Fathers gave us the lovely elm that for a century or more have been the pride of our city. Even a single tree, planted on some April day in a barren spot, will prove to the place a glory evermore. Trees everywhere are inseparable features in a perfect landscape. English rural scenery owes its charm to its parks and hedges. In the country alone does not groves and forests. Last Autumn many of our city streets were gloriously beautiful with the picturesque and many-hued foliage of the maples; and the nearby groves were magnificent with the mingling of the scarlet sweet-gum leaves with the yellow of the hickory and the glossy green and russet of the oak. The object desired by the proposition is not far away and unattainable; every man who owns a city lot may plant a forest tree and change the features of the street in which he lives.

We have spoken of tree-planting in its poetic and artistic sense. The necessity for it in a utilitarian sense is imperative. In almost every part of our own State we see lands once rejoicing in fertility now sterile because the forests have been cut away, leaving the springs and streams they were sheltered by the shade to become diminished or entirely dried up. This diminution of moisture, alienists tell us, have produced marked climatic changes that make devastating droughts of common occurrence. We have only to look towards the treeless prairies of the West to see the effects of droughts and cyclones that do their worst work in regions where forest belts are very rare. Old men can tell us of rivulets in New Jersey when they were small boys; if every man, woman and child in New Jersey who can do so, should plant a forest tree each year they would soon convert the waste places into a lovely paradise of groves. Our dusty suburban avenues and country roads would be made delightful with shade, and thousands of feeble springs would leap forth with their old-time vigor to refresh anew the thirsty meadows and give their volume to the dwindling rivers.

Several Western States have already set apart a day for tree planting, and the results have equalled their anticipations. It is probable that this will be made a national event, and it is in anticipation of a law to be passed by Congress to that effect that Mr. Stainsby offers his resolution.—Newark Journal.

## "The Man that Ate Yer Ma!"

An itinerant Scotch preacher on his rounds, arrived unexpectedly at one of his remote stations, where the good wife of the little farm, anxious to be hospitable, was obliged to be hospitable, on his arrival. He got a immediately, the chief portion consisting of a fine fat fowl, on which he heartily regaled himself; but afterwards, standing in the doorway, admiring the evening, his digestion was somewhat retarded by hearing the youngest-born of his hostess exclaim, pityingly, to a half-fledged chicken, mournfully "cheeping" about the child's feet—"Chuckle, chuckle, pair wee chuckle, there's the mon that ate yer ma!"—Exchange.

## Fair Game.

THE attendance at the Stock Exchange this morning was not particularly large, but the members made up in noise what they lacked in numbers. The visitors' galleries were crowded, many ladies being present.

"What do they shout so loudly for?" inquired a pretty young woman who had come to see the sights. "Is this the Christmas game?"

"Oh, no," replied her companion, "they are buying and selling stocks from each other or pretending to, and they shout because they are so excited they can't help it. Their customers come here and watch 'em. If a man's Broker doesn't shout louder and get wilder than any other broker, he (the customer, thinks that his orders are not well executed."

"But why do they jump up and down, and shake their hands at each other? Is that part of the game?"

"They do that when their voices give out, and they can't shout any more. They want their customers up here to see that they are alive and kicking."

"Show me Gould and Vanderbilt," said the pretty girl.

"They are not here to-day; they are buying Christmas presents. Usually they sit up here in the gallery drinking champagne and encouraging their brokers by signs and dropping down orders written on little bits of papers; you can see the scraps all over the floor now—yesterday's work. But to-day they are in town in the shops buying diamonds by the pound."—New York Paper.

## A Colored Man's Eloquence.

The most thoroughly eloquent and effective speeches ever made in the Legislature of Texas were pronounced by two negroes, and both of much the same general import. Both recounted the story of Negro devotion to "old master and mistress." When one of these natural orators, himself an old man, extended his black, horny hands and said: "There can be no great race enmity between us. This cannot come while my old master and mistress live. No, nor while their children and mine survive. They were kind and generous to me. I knew no want of to-day or care for to-morrow when I was their property. Look at these wrinkled, rough hands. They tell the tale. They tell how I toiled for them. And the story is not ended. They are old and helpless now, and live as I once did in a little cabin, and I still toil for them. I send them half of every dollar I draw from the State Treasury, and when their daughter, a beautiful and good girl, whom I used to carry when she was a child, in these strong arms, was married not long ago, I sent her a check for \$1,000. Have I not the right to ask you, gentlemen of the majority, to deal generously with my race?"—Fort Worth (Texas) Gazette.

A MAN in North Carolina, who was saved from a conviction for horse stealing by the powerful plea of his lawyer, after his acquittal by the jury, was asked by the lawyer: "Honor bright, now Bill, you did steal that horse, didn't you?" "Now look a-here, judge," was the reply. "I allers did think I stole that hoss, but since I hear you speak to that 'ere jury, I'll be dogoned if I ain't got my doubts about it."—Galaxy.

APPROPOS of the discussion as to the antiquity of holiday cards, the London correspondent of the Manchester Guardian writes that the British Museum possesses a print representing an infant with wishes for a happy new year. It is an engraving, executed in Lower Germany in the second half of the fifteenth century. The infant is seen standing erect on a rich flower of fantastic form, holding a little banner.

## List of Letters

Remaining unclaimed in the Post Office at Bloomfield, N. J., on Wednesday, Feb. 6th, 1884.

Allen, Margaret. Crane, Rhoda. Broadhead, Mrs. E. Deltrick, Mrs. Mollie L. Cadmus, H. K. Robbins, Mrs. Emma Club, German. West, Charles.

Any person calling for the above will please ask for "advertised" letters.

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